



ASH TO MAKE A COMEBACK IN MANI RATNAM'S NEXT?
Actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan may make a comeback in director Mani Ratnam's next. "Mani is working on a film which requires a strong female protagonist. Ash was keen to return in a film directed by one of her two favourite directors — Sanjay Leela Bhansali or Mani Ratnam. While she's looking forward to working with Sanjay again, she'll return with Mani's next," a source told a Mumbai tabloid.



BHATT, TAURANI LOCK HORNS OVER RAAZ RIGHTS
Looks like filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt (above, left) and producer Ramesh Taurani are headed for a fight over the franchise rights for Raaz. According to a Mumbai tabloid, Bhatt said that the franchise belongs to his production banner. But Taurani was quoted as saying, "The first installment was made in 2002 and then, Mahesh Bhatt and I were co-producers. So, we have joint ownership of the title, Raaz 4."



'FILMS HAVE THEIR LIMITATIONS'

Musical maestro AR Rahman admits that composing for movies involves artistic boundaries; says he will quit the day he doesn't live up to his audience's expectations

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His film career began in the early '90s. Since then, there's been no looking back for AR Rahman. But even today, numerous films, honours, two Oscars and two Grammys later, the musical maestro's enthusiasm to live up to his audience's expectations remains intact. Here, Rahman talks to us about his journey, his motivations and more.

Does the fan following and the success ever get overwhelming?

The hard part is keeping up with the respect that people have given me. Many extraordinary people fizzle out after a while. I want to keep making good music till I feel it's alright. I will quit when I am unable to cater to people's expectations.

So the thought of quitting has crossed your mind?
You never know. Calls will be taken when they are supposed to be taken. But I love creating music and I think there is enough motivation for me to keep going. Also, I have a music school and I want to pass on whatever I have learnt to the new generation.

You've avoided composing for Bollywood's action potboilers. Is it because the music in these films is primarily meant to suit the stars' personalities?
I did that for Shah Rukh Khan for Jab Tak Hai Jaan (2012) and it did have some elements that suited his personality. I do that for Rajinikanth every time. People expect certain things from me as a brand and, if I don't give them that, they will throw me out. But yes, I would say that films have their limitations and artistic boundaries. You can't supersede what the film is saying. Musically, you can't go somewhere else.

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Ashwin's international connection

The best-selling author talks about his collaboration with American novelist James Patterson and his next book Sialkot Saga

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Author Ashwin Sanghi's thrillers, set against the backdrop of history, theology and mythology, have always been page turners. However, the subject of his upcoming fiction, Private India series, in collaboration with James Patterson, is contemporary. Another of his books, Sialkot Saga, which is expected to be out by 2014-end, revolves around economics in the context of Indian history. Sanghi spoke to HT City. Excerpts:

What made you collaborate with James Patterson?

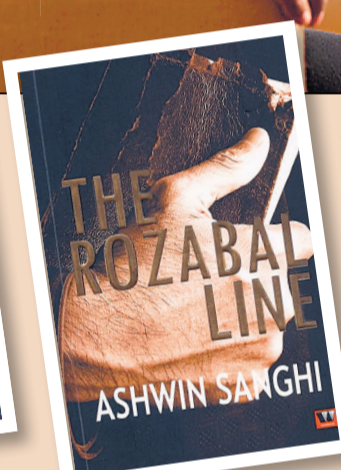
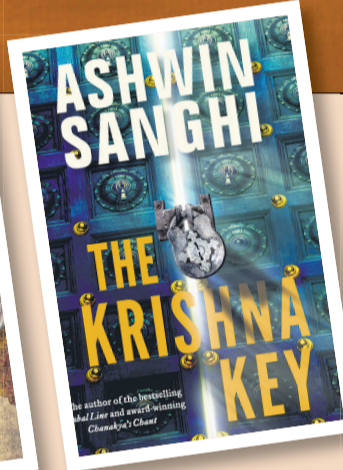
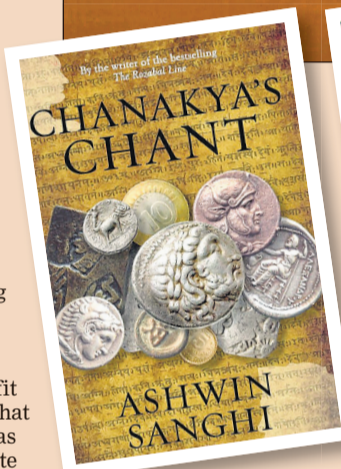
One of my friends, who had read all three of my books and works for Patterson's publisher, suggested my name. Given that all my previous books have been thrillers with compelling pace and unexpected hooks, traits that are amply evident in James Patterson's writing, the fit seemed a natural one. What excited me was that it was an opportunity to co-write a thriller that was contemporary, with no elements of history or mythology.

Don't you think co-writing dilutes the individual style of a writer?
Not really. While the process of collaboration does imply some compromises, it also means complementarity.

What has been your contribution to Private India?
This collaboration is an extension of what I have already been doing — writing thrillers — but with an entirely modern and con-



Ashwin Sanghi



Are you open to more such collaborations in the future?
Not in the immediate term as I have several independent projects lined up for 2014. I may be open to collaborations in 2015.

Tell us about your next, Sialkot Saga?
I have started writing it. If everything goes well, I would release it by end of 2014. It is my opportunity to discuss the world of business, finance and economics in the context of Indian history.

temporary backdrop. James provided me with a guideline as well as an existing set of characters that needed to be developed in the story. We also discussed the plot outline at length and froze it after several mutually acceptable amendments. I then proceeded to write the first draft, while the second and third have been written by him. All of this happened over periodic email interactions.

It was great fun working on a project that is so completely and utterly commercial in every sense. Patterson has developed a perfect formula as regards to the collaborative process and his attention to elements that build suspense, fear and surprise is amazing. He has been supportive and surprisingly liberal.

What is Private India all about?
Patterson is one of the world's highest selling authors. While he has written around 97 novels, some of these are part of

what is called the Private series. This series is about a global detective agency, Private, which is called in to solve criminal cases that baffle the police. The fictional head of this agency is a charismatic chap called Jack Morgan. Patterson has co-authored all the books in the Private series thus far. The stories involve deadly criminals being hunted down by Morgan's team in different parts of the world. Private India will simply be an extension of that franchise to India.

Your book Chanakya's Chant was adopted into a film. UTV had acquired an option to produce the film based on Chanakya's Chant for a period of one year. Thereafter, the option period was renewed till 2013. Given that we were unable to make progress on an acceptable script, we have decided to leave the options open. As of now, my agents CAA-Kwan are in the process of discussions with other producers and directors.



All in the family

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Way back in 1993, he penned the screenplay of Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke. Ever since, Aamir Khan hasn't tried his hand at writing stories or screenplays. But a couple of years back, the superstar had revealed that he was writing a new script along with his wife Kiran Rao and cousins Mansoor and Nuzhat Khan. But the script is yet to see the light of day. Interestingly, when we asked Aamir about it, he admits that "there's a script we're working on." At the same time, he admits that it's too early to discuss details. "It's in very initial stages and since I've been busy with Dhoom:3 (2013) and PK., I've not had that kind of time (to focus on it). Now that Dhoom:3 has released and PK. is almost

over, I will look into that now," he says. Although the said script hasn't yet been completed, Aamir insists that he "had only kept it on the back-burner." He adds, "It's an idea which I have that we're planning to develop into a script for Aamir Khan Productions. So let's see how that goes," says the actor, who has directed the National Award-winning Taare Zameen Par (2007). A few days ago, Aamir told us that Kiran too is "working on a script, and it's in the initial stage". He had said, "I will definitely produce it if I like it. If I don't like something, I can't do it. But either way, I'll support her. As her partner, I'll support her in anything she wants to do. And if it's something that I can act in, I'll be really happy as she's a fine director and working with her has been one of my best experiences."

'Then we should re-launch Deepika'

That's what Salman Khan said in jest when he was informed of the actress's keenness to work with him in a film

They're both considered Bollywood's box office favourites in their own ways, but Salman Khan and Deepika Padukone are yet to share screen space. Some time ago, rumours had it that the two have been signed for Sooraj Barjatya's next film. However, Deepika denied the news. But she maintained — like she has several times in the past — that she is interested in working with Salman. In a previous interview, she had even said, "I want to work in a romantic film with him; a nice love story. I have always shown my fondness for him. He comes across as a very romantic person and that will reflect on screen." When we informed the Dabangg (2010) actor of Deepika's keenness, he jokingly said, "Really? Then I think we should re-launch her." Deepika made her debut opposite Shah Rukh Khan in Om Shanti Om (2007), but it was Salman who first spotted her and even offered her a film. But she turned down the offer back then.



Salman Khan

"I was too young and unclear about which profession to choose at that time. A lot of people thought I was foolish to let it go, but I guess it was destined. But I am glad that I didn't do the film, because I know I wouldn't have done justice to it and to our pairing then," Deepika had said.

HTC



Karan to direct again by year-end

Filmmaker Karan Johar, who last directed the 2012 movie Student Of The Year, says he will go behind the camera again by the end of 2014. He is currently seen on the small screen as one of the judges of a talent hunt show on TV and also on his chat show. "December this year, I will start my next film.

That's all I can say at the moment," says Karan. There were reports that Karan may direct a period drama, but he denies it and says, "It's not a different film which I can't talk about right now." Karan first donned the director's hat for the 1998 Shah Rukh Khan-starrer Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998).

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